



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE DIARY OF AN OLD NEW ENGLAND MINISTER¹

FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE

MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

The morbid emotional self-consciousness of such a journal as David Brainerd's was not likely to find imitation in the active seaport society of Salem. But journals were kept there. Hawthorne began one at the tender age of twelve with the motive of self-improvement in expression, and the practised ease he gained appears in the later note-books, which are cherished illustrations of his grave and graceful style as well as of the artist's propensity to transmute experience into symbol and dream. The Salem boy doubtless did not know that his most eminent elder townsman was an indefatigable diarist, jotting down in careless, awkward language matter not meant for an imaginative version of life. Certainly too the older Salem diarist was not recording his spiritual condition. The Reverend William Bentley, a short and portly clergyman, living an unhampered celibate life, was wont to close days of phenomenal industry by hasty and incisive records of event and comment. After his vigorous walk in the early morning he had stood at a desk all the forenoon working on sermons and correspondence, on manuscript text-books in science or languages, on scripture commentaries, local history, critical reviews of books read, on bi-weekly summaries of home and foreign news to be printed in the newspapers, on parochial records minutely exact as to family occupation and personal

¹ The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Mass. 4 vols. Published by The Salem Institute. Vol. I, 1905, pp. xliii, 456; Vol. II, 1907, pp. 506; Vol. III, 1911, pp. 601; Vol. IV, 1914, pp. 737.

circumstance. Other hours were given to private pupils, to parish visits, to care of the poor and sick, to catechizing the young or attending the School Board, or to watching with an eager and accurate eye every detail of local industry, politics, health, and weather. An unflagging curiosity made him familiar not only with the virtues and vices of his community but also with twenty languages ancient and modern, and therefore with the ways of men afar in space and time. In the evening he was occasionally something like a University Extension Lecturer, and when he got to his bedtime-diary he did not relax into sentimental self-contemplation. His attention was still on the not-self. In youth, to be sure, he had begun to make record of his moral experiences, but after some hundreds of pages had abandoned the practice. "Cool reflection told me a few devout prayers and well conceived reflections were better than whole volumes of confessions of feelings and vanity. Passion should be described, not lamented. Resolutions should be noticed not as made but kept" (Diary, II, 277).

Introspection, then, finds no place in the four substantial volumes of diary, which cover a period of thirty-five years (1784-1819). Even when unhappy relations with his father and brothers extort expressions of pain and vexation, he is brief and objective, recording painful facts but not his self-pity. Eager he was, undoubtedly, for public recognition of his abilities and accomplishments, but he is silent about praise, and leaves unmentioned an honor conferred by a Pennsylvania college, and the handsome offer of the Presidency of the University of Virginia. When at his life's end Harvard College tardily bestowed the degree of Doctor of Divinity, he records the event and the fact that his heterodoxy had been an obstacle, but he made not the slightest comment. Undoubtedly too he was a man of warm and tender affections, but only rarely did

he yield to their sweet pressure when the diary was opened. Once indeed he did, with words of touching, unselfish solicitude recording the marriage of his dear young pupil and friend, Hannah Crowninshield, and again when Captain Benjamin Hodges was taken with a bleeding of the lungs: "I never was more alarmed. I never before felt such sympathy. My tears flowed silently but plentifully. As I resisted them the waves rose." These volumes reveal many things about the wealth and poverty of the community, yet they all but conceal his own anxieties from financial hardship and wholly ignore his own persistent benevolences which made the hardship more painful. The very omissions reveal the finer traits of the man. Surely a sensibility deep and fine lay back of his cherished reticence, his seemingly complete absorption in outward things of social progress, his collector-passion for coins, medals, curiosities, portraits, and engravings, and his obsession by an interest in genealogies. Some sentiments were inhibited by a Stoical ideal. In verses (for, being without a sense of humor, he occasionally indulged in doggerel) a young lady, who asked why he neglected to marry, is told:

"Reason I followed;
But without fire, Love's but a name;
Reason is cool, deliberate, wise;
'Tis only passion fans the flame" (I, 82).

Cool, deliberate, wise; therefore, whatever his prejudices, a man of large and generous policy. The revivalistic preaching of Spaulding, a clerical neighbor, was anathema to him, but he urged the negroes of Salem to attend it, since it was suited to their temperament, and he regretted the final institution of a separate meeting for negroes (IV, 621). Wholly averse to the system of the Episcopalians, he was a genuine friend and neighbor to them. When Bishop Seabury passed through Salem,

Bentley politely got himself presented (I, 268), and A. V. Griswold, Bishop of Rhode Island, on being coldly received by the Salem Rector, found cordial hospitality in Bentley's home. The conspicuous illustration of this temper is shown by his relations to the Catholics. Significantly, it was to him that the Rev. John Thayer, a Yale graduate converted to Romanism, appealed in 1790 for a list of Salem Catholics and for aid in finding a place for worship. Bentley secured co-operation and protection from the Selectmen and wrote in reply: "It is my desire that every man enjoy his religion not by toleration, but as the inalienable right of his nature" (I, 162). Thayer was a presumptuous and cantankerous guest of Bentley for several days, even expecting his host to be Responsor in the Mass and to arrange for the sale of a batch of propagandist Catholic pamphlets which he left at his departure (I, 165). While glad to be rid of this uncomfortable missionary, Bentley readily aided the Spanish Consul and Dr. Francis Matignon in establishing Catholic worship in Boston, securing a contribution of fifty dollars from a family in his own parish. "We ought," he notes, "to do everything which can encourage the liberality in France and Spain by which the Protestant religion may be more fully tolerated" (III, 23). In 1803 Bishop Carroll of Maryland with two priests, one of them being Cheverus, gave him pleasure by a visit in Salem (III, 55), and in 1811 Bishop Cheverus, again a welcome guest, had Bentley for an auditor at a sermon which the Protestant pastor enjoyed and approved (IV, 20). At a later time the Catholics of Salem were grateful for Bentley's trouble in procuring a hall for their celebration of the Mass (IV, 552). When an Irish pauper died in the Poor House, Bentley conducted the funeral, conscientiously using such scripture as the Roman Breviary provided, and resorted to Bourdaloue and Massillon for the sermon.

On the same day he entertained two Catholic Indian chiefs of the Penobscot tribe, and at parting gave them from his cabinet a crucifix, two mass-books, and plaster images (IV, 502). In view of the sturdy intensity of his rationalistic convictions these incidents evidence a generous ability to transcend prejudice.

Moral guardian of a parish and having a mind habituated to expression by incessant practice, Parson Bentley did not fail to provoke resentment. Strength of conscience gave him calm, unyielding courage in the personal difficulties resulting from a sermon in 1788, when he protested against the violation of law by a ship's clearing for the slave trade (I, 104, 105, 106, 123); but there were other episodes which led him to resolve on "prudence in my conversation and great caution in my attachments" (I, 119). After five years of ministerial experience he emphatically determines to use cautious self-restraint, to "join the serpent to the friendly re-prover" (I, 134), and he records the sober calculation which made him enter into friendships which would otherwise be uncongenial (I, 177; IV, 290). This discipline of self in public intercourse accounts, perhaps, for many things in the diary. Salem households accustomed by tradition to look back on Dr. Bentley with profound veneration have been scandalized by the gossiping disrespect and caustic acerbity of these notes. The reader's attention passes over the words of praise given to neighbors and parishioners as a thing expected, but is startled by such acidities as the obituary comment, "all sense but common sense" (I, 38), or the verdict, "not a man for God, or for society, and his passions make him terrible to himself" (I, 169), or the comment on a colleague in the School Committee, "the monkey shows his tail" (IV, 7), or again, "a fanatic of the first chop" (IV, 54), "Morse and his gang" (IV, 130), "a true brat of the troublesome father" (IV, 526). Political partisanship and

theological animus inspired many paragraphs of contemptuous or hostile disparagement. It was a time when men were embroiled, and the era of good feeling later brought corrections and reconciliations. In all instances, too, we may reflect that this lonely celibate, deprived of a listening domestic ear, needed a safety valve for the artificial repression prudently adopted out of doors. The diary was such an escape from unnatural tension.

In 1790 Salem was relatively a place of importance, with a population of 7,921, about half that of Boston. In theory 1,277 persons were supposed to worship in the East Church, though the church could not hold them all. The large numbers of young people in Dr. Bentley's catechizing classes show that he was in fact pastor to the whole district, though few indeed were the actual communicants—sixteen in 1785 (I, 20) and sixty-three in 1802 (II, 408). There were long-standing historical reasons in this neighborhood for this decline of the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, but it marks also a decline in spiritual experience. The absorbing interests of politics and war at the end of the colonial period had been followed by a time of lethargy and moral weakness, particularly among the men, old and young. In 1808 Bentley notes that "all the Congregational Churches in Boston have not so many male members as one Church half a Century ago did contain" (III, 382), and in 1813, commenting again on this fact, he reflects that "the passions are seldom admitted to be doorkeepers" (IV, 152). In the ninety years of its history before 1808 the East Church of Salem had only fifty-eight male members, though the women counted four times that number (III, 382). In 1809, out of resentment at the minister's politics, the only male communicant besides the Warden left to join another society—and the Warden staid at home. Bentley made a sad appeal to his hearers "not to leave him and a reputable Church of females unsupported" (III, 473).

The parishioners were coopers, ropemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, a few shopkeepers, many mariners, of whom fifty-nine were captains of vessels, and, because of the perils of the sea, there were many widows (I, 222). A large proportion were house-owners, and several families were of large wealth. In older Salem parishes there was still greater wealth. William Gray amassed three million, but that fortune was transferred to Boston. The ship-owner, Elias Haskett Derby, dying in 1799, left an estate of a million dollars, and his son Richard, making the grand tour in Europe, was received at foreign courts and came home laden with works of art (III, 55). In 1817 Captain Forester died as the richest man in Salem with an estate of \$1,400,000 (IV, 463). In 1815 George Crowninshield, Bentley's own parishioner, professed to have loaned a million to the United States treasury. The average conditions were surely comfortable in a town which voted to tax itself \$6,000 for the expense of funeral honors to George Washington (II, 327). In the exceptional time of the great embargo in 1809 there was a temporary distress. The richer citizens met the emergency with a soup-house at which a thousand applicants were well fed (III, 412, 414), and a fund was raised to supply each one with a loaf of bread a day. William Gray gave two barrels of flour a week and stood ready to give one a day (III, 409). At all times, indeed, there were straitened households where the cruel sea made so many widows. A few rich citizens seem to have provided—perhaps inadequately—the thousand or so dollars a year raised for their relief (IV, 371, 499), and some of them made the warm-hearted Bentley the agent of their philanthropy (III, 139, 140, 141). Improvidence and intemperance brought some to the Charity House; but in those days of churches which had been town churches the minister was a familiar guest there and the inmates had seats in the church.

In spite of the general ease, the occasional distinguished wealth, and the ready philanthropy, Salem was reprehensible in the support of its ministers. As an associate pastor Bentley began with a salary of £130 (\$433.) and as sole pastor had £160 (\$530.), which in 1804 was raised to \$800. (III, 108). This was, as Bentley observes in 1817, "one of the smallest in Essex" (IV, 490). The salary at the North Church was \$1,200. In 1817 he had cause to feel the insufficiency of salary, for at that time food and fuel were exceptionally dear (compare the market prices, IV, 434). On coming to Salem Bentley had been promised a "settlement" of £200, one-half being paid at once, the rest being due after a year. At that time such a settlement was advantageous as capital owing to the rapid increment of wealth, but twenty years later this had ceased to be the case and ministers preferred a larger annual salary without the initial settlement (III, 168). However, the second instalment of Bentley's settlement was never paid, and in 1817 after his long and eminent service the parish owed him not only the hundred pounds but salary for two years, or \$2,000 in all. In addition the minister had had to pay part of the cost of the church music, and only gifts from friends had saved him from immediate suffering (IV, 484, 490). The over-generous minister waived half of the debt, but with extraordinary meanness the congregation, on hearing of these private donations, deducted them from the parochial debt and paid him only \$800. (IV, 496). It is easy to imagine the difficulty for a man with dependent relatives, an impulsively generous friend of the poor, and a passionate collector of expensive foreign books.

The activity of the pastor of the East Church was not confined to his parish. He was an apostle of culture. From his other merciless industry he found time for private pupils, in some cases for charity's sake, and in

the School Committee he showed, no doubt, an irrepressible zeal that could hardly be restrained to the just limits of a member's share in counsel. He was as strenuous about style of penmanship and methods of teaching spelling as he was in the issues of national politics—and spelling seems to be the beam in his own eye. On his arrival in Salem in 1783 there was only one public school, containing both the elementary grade and the "Grammar" School which prepared for college. These students of Latin were few, seven in 1792, but the number seems to vary with the efficiency of the teacher. A considerable list of Latin authors was read, while Greek seems to be studied only for the sake of the New Testament (I, 275, 399; II, 12, 31, 146, 215). The course which Bentley provided for his private pupil, Charles Jackson, in 1787 covered English Grammar, Rhetoric, Literary History, the range of Latin authors now read in school and college combined, and something of the *realia* of ancient art and science. But nothing more! In the common public school teaching was limited to the three R's, the girls attending only from eleven to twelve, or in summer, when days were longer, also from four to five in the afternoon (III, 39). School development was rapid. Already in 1791 there were four public schools with five teachers (I, 275), and in 1803 the attendance was about six hundred, half of them girls. Before 1805 the common school teacher's salary was a beggarly hundred dollars, but then \$150. was demanded. The Grammar School master was better off with \$500. (in 1796, II, 175). The heart of pity goes out to the woman teaching a country school for four shillings sixpence a week and clamoring for a living wage of ten and six, or seventy-two cents more than her weekly board (III, 230). Private schools were equally numerous, four in 1798, and the new ones added in 1803 and 1804 engaged masters at the respectable salaries of \$1100. and \$900. (III, 2, 92).

This was not a democratic system of education, but democracy in Salem was not yet. It was a long climb from the lower level of popular culture to the intellectual life of the "educated," and the fact has its bearings on the ecclesiastical history of the town. In the higher circles there were men of eminent ability, not only those who, like the Pickerings and Crowninshields or Judge Story, rose to high public station in the nation's life, but also some men of marked scientific talent, like Captain Gibaut and Nathaniel Bowditch. To Bentley, who was over-conscious of his own academic privileges, Bowditch was objectionable as a self-taught youth and the unlawful heir of a fame that should have been Gibaut's, but in the end Bowditch's great mathematical eminence and his remarkable scientific library dominated the parson with respect. Lawyers and doctors were a learned class, but Bentley is dubious concerning the scholarship of the clergy both in Salem and elsewhere. We seem to be always hearing of a decline in clerical scholarship, of old and now. So Bentley looked back to the ministers of an older day as of higher learning (III, 88, 189): "I know not one Hebrew Scholar in New England, nor one Orientalist. . . . In Theology, few are acquainted with any but the few books of the day, and no Ecclesiastical Historian do I know that has consulted the best writers of this description." This was said in 1805. Soon, indeed, he found foretokens of a day of scholarship and intellectual life. He seemed to know the importance of the enterprise of Welles, scholarly bookseller in Boston, who in 1806 made the first importation, not on orders but for general sale, of German classical and critical works. The great efflorescence of New England culture which came in part from the invasion of this new interest was a promised day into which Bentley was not to enter, but the historians of it have reason to think of Bentley in connection with it. His correspondence with European

scholars enabled him to furnish George Ticknor with letters of introduction in 1815, and in that year also Edward Everett, appointed to the college chair that was "to connect Greek Literature with Biblical Criticism," promptly informed Bentley that the subject of his inaugural oration would be the authority of the Homeric poems. Remembering Emerson's great passage about the birth of a Periclean age for New England which began with Everett's exposition of Wolff and Heyne, attention underscores the entry: "I sent him Wolf and Heyne" (IV, 319). (Note: The text has Heman; a probable error.)

Indications of the growth of culture are abundant in the diary of this devotee of knowledge. On his travels he was keenly interested in the rise of circulating and public libraries (II, 49). A circulating library was opened in Salem in 1790 consisting chiefly of novels and works of science. When sold and dispersed in 1818 this had nearly seven thousand volumes (I, 136; IV, 546). Of earlier origin Salem had also a small "Social Library" and a joint stock Philosophical Library, a share in which cost Bentley £9 and involved annual assessments not inconsiderable (I, 151, 152, 369). In 1810 these two were joined in the Salem Athenaeum, the standards of which may be judged from the purchases it made at the sale of J. S. Buckminster's books in 1812: "Stephens Thesaurus for 225 dollars, Wettstein 50, D. Griesback 25 D." (IV, 112). Rich families, Derby and Pickering, imported European books, and Bowditch had a collection of mathematical works unsurpassed elsewhere (IV, 444); but the richest private library was Bentley's own, nearly half of which he gave to Allegheny College, then recently founded in the village of Meadville, Pennsylvania. The oldest college building fittingly bears the name of Bentley Hall. He loved to acquire books, he loved to make presents of them; poetry to young ladies, sermons and the like to adults (I, 19, 40, 63, 97, 111).

Bentley's interests were versatile and included the arts. As a local historian he prized the portraits of old worthies, but he had a critical appreciative taste for the manner as well as the subject of a painting. He knew what painters were "wretched daubers at best" (III, 470). His hosts knew that exhibition of their engravings made entertainment for him, and a secular dissipation in Boston consisted for him in the critical inspection of the religious paintings in churches, the portraits in the Court House, the works of art in Bowen's Museum. Popular interest in painting began in Salem when E. H. Derby brought from Italy a Neapolitan named Corné, who made an indifferent living by indifferent portraits and exhibitions of panoramas. Having no originality, he copied his panoramic scenes from engravings. His best success was in his paintings of ships. "In every house we see the ships of our harbour delineated for those who have navigated them. Painting before unknown is now common among our children" (III, 68, 275, 481). The pupils, however, did not arrive at fame. One became a sign-painter, another died early from drink, and Hannah Crowninshield married. Music made greater progress, and a chapter in the history of music in America might be written from the profuse entries of the diary concerning hymnody, choirs, and singing-schools. The minister's interest in music is ardent and constant, but his taste is for music that shows only moderate improvement on the bald harmonies of Puritanism. An ampler development began when in 1797 a music teacher, Holyoke, formed a society for instrumental music. "Music has ever been low in this place," Bentley had said, but now it was no longer true (II, 247; III, 292). The day came at last when there was an Oratorio of Sacred Music in the First Church, December 1, 1812, and the clerical connoisseur pens an acute criticism. In December, 1817, the Salem Handel Society is more successful, and repeats

the performance a month later (IV, 135, 492, 496). After that the oratorio was an annual affair, a solemn affair, indeed, with the clergy presiding. Bentley knew that music was a civilizing influence. "Our fathers mistook the power of Musick for the work of the Devil, when if they had taught the Indians music and made violent agitation accompanying shouts, clapping of hands as in David's time, they might have done more to gain the Indians than by all their practices" (IV, 560). Bentley never saw grand opera.

All these are high things, and what of play? Certainly life was not tame and monotonous. There was the thrill of maritime adventure and the tales of captains home from the Mediterranean or the Orient. There was the turbulence of politics through the hot passions of Federalists and Republicans. There was the spectacle of Napoleonic wars abroad, the pinch of Berlin and Milan decrees felt at home, the excitement of the Embargo, the approach and the anxious experience of war. All this is in the diary, but also the chronicle of amusements. This avid observer of life lists the "puerile sports" of New England—the succession of skating and sledding, marble time, tops in April, shuttlecock in May, then bat and ball and rickets, kites in autumn, and finally football for adults, though "the bruising of shins has rendered it rather disgraceful to those of better education" (I, 254). No dry-as-dust this bookish celibate, this caustic moralist. He seems to be saying, Mirth, admit me of your crew! How many picnics of young folk he managed, leader of what he styles their gambols! He frowns on the low tavern-drinking, dancing, and gambling of election day (II, 92), but watches with serene pleasure the innocent mirth with which Marblehead makes holiday after ordaining its new minister, noting the fishermen at athletic sports, and the free negroes merry at their dancing (II, 397). And shall not the heirs of Puritanism dance? It

was a vexed question. Militia balls had long been known, and balls for the birthdays of Washington and Adams. Most towns in fact had Assembly Halls for dancing and our parson inspects them on his travels (e.g., II, 17, 232). All this, however, implies a world that had slipped from Puritan control. But even this minister indulgently connives at a dancing-class for sea-captains' daughters under prudent regulations (1789, I, 81), and resents the local gossip censorious of the dance permitted in Captain Boardman's house (I, 119, 122). His artistic eye finds pleasure at sight of a circle of girls dancing. "How beautiful if this exercise were only a domestic amusement" (II, 296). In truth it is a valued accomplishment. "It were to be wished that it made a part in every education for more reasons than one, and that it might not be overrated" (I, 176). In 1798 a marked change came over Salem society. Two dancing-schools came into existence, one of them conducted by a prudent English gentleman married to a daughter of the musician Holyoke, and therefore to be trusted by social circles to which he belonged. Whereas formerly only one family of the East Church went to an assembly, every ball and assembly now drew many, especially the ball of Mr. Turner's dancing-class. In 1801 the minister records that all families are agog with expectation of the dancing-school ball. "The great attention shews that the subject is not very familiar to us" (II, 268, 322, 401). Three years later the clergyman feels it an honor to be invited to Turner's ball (III, 120), but he knows the limits of professional propriety and censures the Boston clergyman who is rumored to have taken part in a set dance. "A violation of the antient rule ought not hastily to have been practised. Archbishop Fénelon would have told him, let them dance, but do not dance yourself" (II, 363). Let them dance—but Puritan reluctance lingers. Mr. Nathaniel West's ball for the younger children of the danc-

ing-class was "at the request of his wife" (II, 372). Would Mr. West describe so meekly the conjugal pressure?

But the theatre! For that too threatens to invade Puritan precincts. In 1792 Salem is agitated by rumors of that which agitates Boston—the demand for a theatre, the united opposition of the clergy, the strife of opinions, the plea of one that pulpit dulness could be corrected by lessons of the stage, the Rev. Dr. Beattie's severe rejoinder that the theatre is not the School of Divines, the Governor's final order that the Sheriff shall obstruct the theatre as a direct violation of law (I, 340, 414, 415). A few months later Bentley hears that a French opera has been performed in Boston: "a curious progress of theatrical exhibitions, which it has been said are intended to assist the pulpit." The Boston theatre came to pass in December, 1793, and Bentley—*nihil humani alienum*—kept informed as to its prospects, its choice of plays, the merits of the actors. Visiting Boston in 1795 he makes a daytime inspection of the interior of the theatre. It is a pleasant building, but he has seen no other theatre and withholds his judgment (II, 127). Vain are the efforts made to induce clergymen to attend performances. "They feel the Compliment of a Visit to the Theatre, as our Country Gentlemen used to receive the news of a Visit to their Minister" (II, 132).

Salem itself was in danger. Even while Boston was fighting the innovation (1792), strolling actors came to Salem "to act comic, sing sailor's songs, and dance jigs for the amusement of all who will pay three shillings," and an audience of one hundred was well pleased. This, Bentley saw, was the entering wedge. An actress, Mrs. Solomon, was there in 1794, "complimented upon her performing a Low character very well" (II, 80), and on March 3 a series of performances began, passionately advocated and eagerly expected by some, so that

tickets "afforded matter for profitable speculation." Bentley learns that the acting is not notable, and records that after a few performances the company broke up, "all of them loaded with debts they will never discharge" (II, 81). Again in 1797 a series of mean performances failed after eight nights, chiefly because the people "have not the money to spare so often as three times a week." The difficulty is economic, not moral, but Bentley could not approve even a schoolmaster's dramatic exhibition, since it "tended to introduce a love of the theatre and to form those manners which we ought to detest. Our manners change and our evils will multiply" (II, 299). Yet was it so? His opinion wavered later. Chronicling balls and theatres, he felt constrained to admit that "whatever be our fears, the town never had less open vice in it than at the present time" (II, 401). But he did not surrender. After an ironical note of the praise of horse races and theatres as revivals of Greek civilization, he concludes: "Everything of this nature may be relatively good, especially when congenial with national manners and education. The theatre and the race were refinements upon savage customs among the Greeks. With us they are triumphs over the character which our country has been taught to love. In one case they exalt" (IV, 59). The reader can extend that sentence.

We infer, then, a simple, grave, and relatively innocent society beginning to enter upon higher intellectual life and relaxing its prejudice against worldly amusements. Over against this we must set revelations of the vice of drunkenness which are appalling. Bentley himself is evidently appalled. No Puritan tradition vetoed indulgence. When the East Church was enlarged in 1770, the Church Committee contracted to furnish the workmen with thirty gallons of rum. "On Wednesday (August 22, 1787) we had a funeral celebrated in the Church of

England, quite in West Indian taste. The Singers were Bacchinalians from Marblehead, who were entertained with punch in the Organ loft, which gave the true air to their music, to the no small satisfaction of the devout men who gave the invitation" (I, 72). As is well known, intemperance came in like a flood with the Revolution, the temperance reform came after Bentley's death. The indices of these four volumes are inadequate for measuring all the painful facts recorded. Young and old, rich and poor, men and women are victims of alcohol. Many are the accidental deaths due to the scourge. Drowned at last, says Bentley in one case. Many the insanities and suicides. Alienists who now emphasize the connection of insanity with intemperance will find data for their thesis in these records. The evil went on increasing over the country because of "the little retailing shops which offer the temptation" (IV, 501).

Would that the diarist's fixed determination and disciplined habit had been at times relaxed that we might read his heart more deeply than is allowed by the sharp brief comments made for the relief of fretting cares in these wearier hours at the close of day. Did not his valiant hope and faith have to strain against a world crude and sordid as seen by the vision of the world his energies sought to build? Is there not something wistful and sad masked behind the resolute, confident, eager vitality of his portrait? What gospel had the good parson for our raw human material that is so resistant to the form of spiritual personality? As a young man he championed an advanced radicalism, the earlier Arminianism of his neighborhood having developed, in his case, into an eighteenth century Rationalism held with a sharp definition and explicitness that was uncommon in America. His elder colleague at once censured him for spreading new doctrine (I, 23), and much later (1808) the *Salem Gazette*—from political animosity, to be sure—linked his

name with that of Thomas Paine. Lending a work by the Deist Tindal and Ethan Allen's *Oracles of Reason* made him suspected of a more pronounced infidelity (I, 82). Such books did not represent his mind. Like his intimate friend James Freeman, he had at the outset of his career set aside the doctrine of the Trinity and adopted the humanitarian view of Jesus; yet he was a Bible Christian, reading the Bible with the sympathies of ethical Rationalism. He was in the beginning enough of a propagandist to distribute Hazlitt's sermons and other English Unitarian literature which he received from Hazlitt. He gave most favor to minor tracts of Priestley which he recommended to his friend Hodges as containing "all you may want to know of the simple doctrines of Christianity. Your own good heart will supply the rules for practice" (I, 111). This sympathy with Priestley and Freeman shows us his attitude to doctrine. The attitude of soul which is more significant than doctrinal apprehension is revealed by his custom of giving to every catechumen Zollikofer's *Exercises of Piety*, "which had been printed at my request" (II, 191). Doubtless it was by his counsel that the Salem School Committee in 1808 gave Zollikofer's *Exercises* as a school prize (III, 186). Apart from the eighteenth century argumentation which it implies as the ground of faith, Zollikofer's devotional book might well be read today as a pure and kindling expression of Christian piety. It was, we may judge, Bentley's canon in religion, though he had none of the German's glow of feeling and excellence of style which won the praise of Goethe in his *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

Specific doctrinal opinions are less interesting than Bentley's open-minded search for truth and his fidelity to a mission of preaching character as salvation. For the ministry he demands a man "who, upon the full conviction of a future moral retribution as the great point of

Christian faith, preaches with sober regard to the virtuous happiness of mankind, being able to abandon without reluctance all worldly interest which may interfere with the conscientious discharge of his duty" (I, 121). "I have adopted many opinions abhorrent of my early prejudices, and am still ready to receive truth upon proper evidence from whatever quarter it may come. I think more honor done to God in rejecting Christianity itself in obedience to my convictions than in any fervor which is pretended towards it, and I hope that no poverty which I can dread or hope I can entertain will weaken my resolutions to act upon my convictions. The only evidence I wish to have of my integrity is a good life, and as to faith, his can't be wrong whose life is in the right" (I, 98). It was his defect to know nothing of Edwards and to be incapable of understanding the intransigent Hopkinsian preaching of his day, stigmatizing it as New Light, Mysticism, ridiculous doctrines of grace, religious frenzy. It was the defect of the Hopkinsians to have none of his ecclesiastical breadth and to acknowledge as religious only men of hectic temperament. For the controversy which began in 1815 he had no great interest. Though as a young man he had shown propagandist zeal for Unitarian views, he seems to have developed another attitude natural to his office as minister to the Eastern parish of Christians living in Salem. It was his duty to edify this section of the community in religious faith and moral strength, and not to use his pulpit in the interest of party or dogmatic views which would divide the community. This is said without knowledge of his sermons, but it is not merely interpretation or surmise. It is the exact meaning of words he used in reviewing his ministry (IV, 352) and the implication of many other comments. No one could fail to know what his personal convictions were, but his aims as a pastor were not those of a theologi-

cal partisan. When therefore Jedediah Morse and the Panoplist summoned the orthodox to come out of these inclusive neighborhood churches and be clean by theological separateness, when Channing's letter to Thatcher appeared and the Unitarian controversy opened, the pastor who had served the Eastern parish of Salem for thirty-two years had little party spirit and spoke of the matter in what might be thought curiously local terms. His response to the situation is chiefly one of vexation that his orthodox neighbor, Worcester, should desert the ideals of the ancient order for the rôle of a theological partisan (IV, 342). Some illusion there was in this phrase—"ideals of the ancient order"—but the fact stands that Congregationalism was a polity without prescription of theological system, and that from its ancient New England history it had preserved the consciousness of being the general church in which, now that men disagreed, citizens of various theological sympathy could meet for the quest of a Christian heart and life. Parishes might vary theologically, but they kept fraternity and their ministers associated in one Association—this being about the only form of denominationalism that existed. If, as in Reading, 1790, an Hopkinsian pastor was settled in a "liberal" neighborhood, a man like Bentley could only say, "at present we are the sport of the ignorant," and try to make the best of it (I, 177). There might be discomfort, as when his Hopkinsian neighbor in the South Church in Salem was intrusively concerned for souls going to ruin under the preaching of the East Church (I, 176); but the liberal pastor held to the ideal of community churches and tried to keep confidence in its success.

The great menace to these parish churches was from the invasion of the so-called sects, Baptists, Methodists, Universalists, or such house-meetings as were occasionally gathered by unlearned and intruding Hopkinsian

itinerants of revivalistic type (e.g., I, 104, 108). There was no disposition to be rigidly exclusive to a properly qualified preacher from without the fold. A Methodist or Universalist might be invited to preach. If the Rev. John Murray was denied a pulpit and had to get a hearing in the Court House, it was not because of his doctrine but because of his lack of education, his attacks on the clergy and his lack of ordination (I, 107 f., 112, 113). The growth of sects was partly due to a fact not directly of a religious character. The hereditary parish churches were suffering from the social shift that followed the Revolution. In such churches dating from a period when society had an aristocratic organization, the seating of the members indicated the social gradation. The wealthy old families had pews on the floor of the church—and gradations were visible there—while the poorer people sat in the galleries. This could hold only when class divisions were meekly accepted. After the Revolution a restless democratic temper grew among the poorer people, and newcomers to growing towns refused the old social subordination in church. Originally the preaching could appeal to all, for it was rehearsal of Bible texts that all knew. Now that a freer intellectual sermon was attempted in a time of growing inequality of culture, the occupants of the gallery were not moved by that which edified the dignitaries in the chief seats. In Boston the galleries of old churches became empty (II, 127, 425). The lowest class of people in Boston, says Bentley in 1795, neglect public worship, and those who go to church are found in the Baptist and Universalist meetings. There the galleries are thronged. In 1807 he writes: "The Rational Congregations have thin galleries. Even hired servants of both sexes, but especially of the females, stipulate for night Lectures (i.e., revival meetings) when they agree for their wages. I do not know a reputable family in town that carries

all its servants with them to the public worship" (III, 271). This social cleavage was accentuated by the bitter opposition of the Congregational clergy to Jeffersonian Democracy. The name of Jefferson was to the despised sects a symbol of religious liberty; to the poor and socially disesteemed it meant political equality. Baptist and Universalist preachers were champions of Republicanism; the standing order revelled in Federalist denunciation of Jefferson's radicalism. The poorer and uneducated, especially when they were newcomers in an old town, shunned the church home of the upper class, and the growth of sects particularly in the case of the Baptists was such as to excite alarm (II, 409, 419, 432; III, 4, 66, 82, 157, 469; IV, 385 f.). The need of proselyting for the sake of church building led the sects into exasperating methods. "Sects in their infancy," Bentley observed, "are much like children, very cross and peevish. They have strong passions and little judgment, have many faults and yet many efforts before they get strong and make the world think favourable of their strength" (III, 167).

Bentley, as we have seen, was distinguished by a tolerant spirit, in spite of the rude remarks he put into his private notes. Among the Congregationalist clergy also he was exceptional by a fervid devotion to the party of Jefferson. He refused therefore to be prejudiced against Baptists. He had a good opinion of their integrity, and only lamented that their preachers were so notably ignorant (III, 28, 85). When a small Baptist church was built in Salem, in 1804, he believed the competition would never be dangerous. He would even welcome the case of such sects being more powerful, since they would thus restrain the spirit of persecution, or, as he said another time, promote a balance of power (III, 82, 119, 297). But he is soon aware of their rapid growth. In 1808 he estimates that Baptist societies in Massa-

chusetts are half as numerous as the Congregationalists. Methodists also increased (III, 345). But Bentley would not allow himself to become sectarian. "If the Baptists refuse our communion, let us not follow their example." "I love principles but hate fanaticism" (III, 241).

The proud old parishes thus were losing social control. They were not an organized denomination. They had no corporate and concerted strength. They agreed only in parish laws, as Bentley said, and they were falling into theological parties—Old Calvinists, Hopkinsians, and liberals who might be variously named as Sublapsarians, Arminians, Unitarians (III, 346).

Into the liberal Arminian region of eastern Massachusetts after the Revolution came pastors educated in Yale or under the influence of Edwards's theology. It was they who conceived the project of making a denomination. The Hopkinsians, beginning with Hopkins himself, inclined to sectarian separation, but they were held in some control by the redoubtable Jedediah Morse, who had more of the old Calvinist temper. Morse from the beginning—in those days of constitution-making—hoped to make a denomination that, like the Connecticut Consociation, could be in affiliation with the Presbyterians south of New England. It was necessary therefore to strengthen conservatism in the neighborhood, and he worked frankly and persistently for that end. He hoped to include all, but his chief anxiety was over the Hopkinsians. A new theological school was a part of his plan, and he managed to unite two rival projects, Old Calvinist and Hopkinsian, in the Andover foundation. So in the end his denominational plan was a union of these two parties with a sacrifice of the liberal wing. Bentley sees the process going on and is fully aware of the meaning of the steps taken. Of Morse he is always abusive and beyond bounds. It may be said in apology

that Morse had made himself odious to Bentley by his fanatic attacks on the order of Masons, Bentley being an enthusiastic Mason, and by his haughty and rancorous Federalism, Bentley being an enthusiastic Republican. This is but to say that the horribly embroiled conditions of those times, when the clergy were politicians as well as pastors, explain the sins of ecclesiastics who were struggling with a difficult church problem. The unexampled bitterness of political strife came to an end in 1814. The era of good feeling in politics began. But the problem of church organization was still on hand, and the habitual passionateness found further exercise with the rending of parishes and the system of exclusion and denunciation. In all this Bentley had no part. A happy death saved him from that necessity. But if the situation had been in his control, the schism would never have come to pass.